

Message Text

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ACTION NRC-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 OES-03 FEAE-00 DODE-00

EPA-01 CEQ-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIE-00 PM-04 INRE-00

SSO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 ACDE-00 /084 W

----- 062058

O 121715Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8493

INFO US ERDA GERMANTOWN MD IMMEDIATE

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DEPT PASS NRC LAFLEUR ASAP

ERDA FOR SIEVERING

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, CA, US

SUBJ: PORT HOPE CONTAMINATION PROBLEM

1. CANADIAN ATOMIC ENERGY CONTROL BOARD PLACED URGENT REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM ERDA AND NRC AS APPROPRIATE IN CONNECTION WITH PORT HOPE CONTAMINATION PROBLEM WHICH HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF SCICOUNS NEWSCLIPS TO ERDA AND NRC FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. TO RECAP SITUATION BRIEFLY FOR ACTION AND INFORMATION ADDRESSEES, PORT HOPE, ONTARIO, WHICH IS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 60 MILES EAST OF TORONTO ON SHORE OF LAKE ONTARIO, HAS BEEN SITE OF PRINCIPAL REFINING AND URANIUM STORAGE FACILITY FOR EL DORADO FOR 25 YEARS. DURING THIS PERIOD WASTES, TAILINGS, AND OTHER MATERIALS HAVE BEEN DISPOSED OF IN AND AROUND THE CITY IN WAYS COMPATIBLE WITH REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES AT THE TIME THEY WERE GENERATED. AS ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL FROM SIMILAR AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, PROCEDURE IN THE EARLIEST DAYS

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OF NUCLEAR INDUSTRY WITH RESPECT TO THESE MATERIALS DID

NOT DIFFER VERY SIGNIFICANTLY FROM NORMAL PRACTICES IN THE MINING AND REFINING INDUSTRY. RECENTLY, CONTAMINATION HAS BEEN DETECTED OVER A WIDE AREA OF THE CITY, I.E., APPROXIMATELY 15 SQUARE MILES CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 45 MILES OF PAVED ROADS AND ANOTHER 30 TO 50 MILES OF UNPAVED IMPROVED ROADS AND LANEWAYS. ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL ONE OF MORE RECENT EVENTS WAS DETECTION OF SUFFICIENTLY HIGH LEVELS OF RADON AND RADON DAUGHTERS IN SCHOOL TO REQUIRE TEMPORARY EVACUATION OF STUDENTS. CANADIAN MEDIA AT FIRST CARRIED STORIES IN FAIRLY LOW KEY WAYS, BUT WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY OF DETECTION OF DANGEROUS AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SITUATION, LEVEL AND MANNER OF COVERAGE HAS ESCALATED. LATEST REPORT IS THAT NBC TELEVISION CREWS TO VISIT AND FILM IN PORT HOPE THIS WEEK. PRESUMABLY CBC AND POSSIBLY OTHERS WILL BE INTO THE PICTURE SHORTLY.

2. AECD IS UNDERTAKING COMPLETE SURVEY OF AREA, INCLUDING BUILDINGS AND HOMES. AECB CREWS WILL BE MONITORING FOR RADON, RADON DAUGHTERS, AND RADIUM IN AIR, INSIDE HOMES AND BUILDINGS, WATER TABLE AND SOIL SAMPLES. THEY HAVE BORROWED HIGHLY SENSITIVE PORTABLE GAMMA MONITOR FROM AECL'S CHALK RIVER LABORATORY FOR SCREENING, BUT MUST RELY ON TIME-CONSUMING LABORATORY WORK FOR MORE ACCURATE ASSESSMENT ONCE A HOTSPOT IS DETECTED.

3. AECB ON URGENT BASIS WOULD APPRECIATE ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE FROM KNOWLEDGEABLE EXPERIENCE ERDA AND NRC OFFICIALS IN FOLLOWING AREAS:

(A) MONITORING TECHNIQUES FOR BOTH GENERAL SURVEY AND MORE PRECISE DEFINITION,

(B) GUIDELINES, GUIDANCE, OR ANYTHING SIMILAR WHICH MIGHT BE HELPFUL BASED ON SIMILAR OR ANTICIPATED U.S. EXPERIENCE.

(C) ADVISE CONCERNING REMEDIAL ACTIONS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED FROM RELEVANT AMERICAN EXPERIENCE.

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4. ON SIMILARLY URGENT BASIS AND IF AVAILABLE, AECB WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHAT SUITABLE EQUIPMENT MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR LOAN FROM EITHER ERDA OR NRC CAPABLE OF:

(A) GENERAL AREA SURVEYS IN SMALL URBAN SITUATION FOR RADON, RADON DAUGHTERS AND RADIUM.

(B) EQUIPMENT SUITABLE FOR MAKING RAPID AND ACCURATE

ESTIMATES OF ABOVE FORMS OF CONTAMINATION ONCE DETECTED BY GENERAL SURVEY. (IN THIS CASE, IDEALLY THE EQUIPMENT WOULD BE HANDHELD AND COULD BE USED FOR REASONABLY ACCURATE SURVEYS IN BASEMENTS, BUILDINGS, SMALL INDUSTRIAL PLANTS, RESIDENCE, ETC.)

5. AECB DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE WELLFOUNDED AND UNFOUNDED IMPLICATIONS FOR ENTIRE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY, ESPECIALLY WITH MOUNTING PUBLICITY. AN IMMEDIATE REPLY FROM ADDRESSEES WOULD BE APPRECIATED. IF EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE AND CAN BE LOANED, AECB PREPARED PICKUP ALL SHIPPING AND/OR REPLACEMENT COSTS.

6. ON POLICY ASPECTS THIS PROBLEM SUGGEST RESPONDING ADDRESSEES WORK THROUGH EMBASSY SCICOUNS BUT ON DETAILED TECHNICAL LEVEL SUGGEST RESPONDING ADDRESSES WORK DIRECTLY WITH RESPONSIBLE AECB DIRECTORATE, THE SAFEGUARDS, NUCLEAR MATERIALS, LICENSING DIVISION. IN THAT DIVISION CONTACTS ARE JOHN MCMANUS, DIRECTOR, (613) 996-5634 OR, IN HIS ABSENCE, JEFF KNIGHT. EMBASSY REQUESTS THAT IT BE KEPT INFORMED IN GENERAL TERMS OF ALL ON-GOING, TECHNICAL-LEVEL CONTACTS WITH AECB AS SITUATION DEVELOPS. JOHNSON

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